



Security Council

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New York

President:	Sir John Sawers	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Belle
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Ha

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/304)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/304)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Affairs.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/304 which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Affairs. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno (spoke in French): Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to introduce the latest 30-day report of the Secretary-General, covering the month of April, on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007). I will begin my briefing with an update on the fighting that took place over the past weekend in Omdurman between rebel fighters and Government of Sudan forces, which has been a source of great concern for all of us. I will then give an overview of the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur, and will provide Council members with additional detail on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and related priorities as outlined in the

30-day report. I will also provide a brief update on the Special Envoys' efforts on the political track.

With regard to the security situation, as the Council will be aware, fighting broke out over the weekend in Omdurman, which is located on the west bank of the Nile river and is one of the three principal urban areas of the Khartoum region. On Friday, 9 May, the Government of Sudan informed the diplomatic community in Khartoum that it had received reports of some 200 to 300 vehicles of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) advancing from Northern Darfur towards Omdurman and the city of El Obeid in Northern Kordofan. The Government stated that the Sudanese Armed Forces had engaged these JEM elements, through aerial attacks, near El Obeid, and warned the diplomatic community to be alert.

On the afternoon of Saturday, 10 May, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) reported that fighting had broken out in Omdurman between the Government forces and the JEM fighters. Media and local sources report that JEM elements took over a police station in Omdurman by force, killing around six local police there. Reports on the size of the JEM incursion ranged from a column of 80 to 300 vehicles. The Government of Sudan alleged that the JEM forces involved were supported and armed by Chadian Government elements. The Government retaliated, killing JEM fighters and destroying their vehicles. Reportedly, sporadic fighting continued until nightfall. According to a Government source, some 20 to 30 JEM vehicles were destroyed and some 200 JEM personnel arrested. Remaining JEM personnel then reportedly scattered to villages to the north and west of the capital. The overall number of casualties incurred during the fighting remains unclear at present, although a number of bodies have been shown on Government media broadcasts.

The Government imposed a curfew on Saturday, 10 May, beginning at 5 p.m. local time in Omdurman and Khartoum. The curfew was lifted in Khartoum on 11 May at 12.30 p.m. local time but remains in place in Omdurman, where Government forces have reportedly conducted house-to-house searches for JEM fighters and their weapons.

(spoke in English)

The Government of Sudan accused Chad of supporting the attack. President Omer Al-Bashir appeared on State television late on Saturday night and

announced the severance of diplomatic ties with Chad. According to media reports, State security forces ransacked the Chadian embassy in Khartoum on Sunday morning and confiscated documents. On 11 May, the Government of Chad issued a statement expressing its surprise that Sudan had severed diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Government of Chad further denied any involvement in the incident.

In El Fasher, the situation remains calm, and UNAMID is continuing limited patrols with force protection, although the temporary closure of airports interrupted the movements of rations and personnel. We are very concerned that the movement of significant numbers of JEM fighters from Darfur all the way to Khartoum went undetected and took both UNAMID and the Government by surprise. The incident underscores the serious shortfalls in the Mission's resources, especially in its aerial reconnaissance capabilities. We will, in the meantime, work with UNAMID to find ways of improving its monitoring capabilities using currently available resources. Equally worryingly, UNAMID Sector West has received unconfirmed report that the Sudan Liberation Army-Unity (SLA-Unity) is gathering forces with over 40 vehicles near Khor Abeche to attack El Fasher. In addition, there have been reports of JEM and Chadian armed elements crossing the border and assembling in Western Darfur.

We continue to monitor the situation closely. UNMIS and UNAMID are in contact with the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and other Government authorities to seek the full reopening of airports and explore alternative options to move the Missions' assets and personnel if the situation further deteriorates. In N'Djamena, the situation remains calm so far, but United Nations staff in Chad has been advised to stay alert. We will, of course, update the Council on any significant developments.

This is a deeply disturbing development that has implications for the already complex security situation on the ground in Darfur, but also for the operations of UNAMID as well as for the efforts to revitalize the Darfur political negotiations, for the Chad-Sudan relationship and, indeed, for Sudanese national politics.

We are primarily concerned about the threat that that escalation poses to UNAMID supply lines from

Port Sudan to Darfur through El Obeid. Possible retaliatory operations by the Government could also lead to further escalation that may impede UNAMID deployment and operations. The attack may also result in setbacks in the ongoing efforts by the Special Envoys to bring the parties together in Geneva to discuss security issues. Furthermore, there is a possibility for an intensification of what sometimes looks like a proxy war between Chad and the Sudan, which would jeopardize the implementation of the Dakar Accord. On 12 May, the Secretary-General issued a statement through his Spokesperson condemning the use of armed force by JEM to achieve political ends and calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

The JEM attack on Omdurman comes during an alarming increase in violence in Darfur itself. During the past six weeks alone, there has been violence between the rebel movements and the Sudanese armed forces, as well as between factions of the movements. That has occurred in both South and North Darfur. Those engagements have included aerial bombardments on rebel positions, including on villages occupied by civilians.

Taken with the increasingly volatile situation on the Chad-Sudan border and the increased banditry targeting United Nations assets, the security situation in Darfur is deteriorating at an alarming rate. The 30-day report includes a detailed description of the specific security incidents that took place during the reporting period.

I should now like to turn to the humanitarian situation, because the ongoing violence has also had a direct impact on humanitarian operations. Thirty-eight commercial trucks hired by the World Food Programme to transport supplies into Darfur were hijacked during the period under review. That has forced the agency to halve rations beginning in the month of May, which will have serious implications for the health and well-being of over 3 million beneficiaries of food aid in Darfur. That also comes at a time when malnutrition indicators remain at extremely worrying levels in many areas of the region.

As a result of violent clashes in all three states so far this year, more than 150,000 civilians have been forced to flee their homes, at a rate of more than 1,200 per day. Increased tribal fighting in South Darfur forced more than 50,000 people to flee the area in the

month of April alone. While some moved to already overstretched camps such as Al Salam, near Nyala, and El Neem, in El Daein, others have reportedly fled to very remote areas that are often inaccessible to humanitarian organizations.

As I have just said, the situation of Darfur's conflict-affected population is growing more precarious by the day as a result of the security situation. With rations reduced by half, with only minimal amounts of food and other relief materials pre-positioned in advance of the rainy season and access decreasing, it is now more important than ever that the parties show full respect for international humanitarian law and ensure full access to populations requiring humanitarian assistance.

Deploying UNAMID has been and will continue to be an extremely complex and difficult undertaking. The circumstances that I have just described pose additional complications. As members can see from the report before the Council, UNAMID is increasing its activities with each passing month, but it still needs to be strengthened considerably before it will be able to implement its mandate.

The process of bringing the Mission to that level of capability has been too slow thus far. Finalizing arrangements with troop and police contributors has been a painstaking and time-consuming process. Troop contributors have justifiably taken time to fully prepare for deployment into a complex and insecure environment. Moving goods from Port Sudan is taking far longer than anticipated and has recently become perilous, with much of the equipment being hijacked on the open road. Within the Mission itself we have seen plans delayed by operational difficulties associated with the great distances to be travelled, the harsh environment and the ongoing and detailed discussions with authorities that are required to take forward most major actions. We must remain conscious of the need to balance the deployment of personnel with a supply chain that is robust enough to support them in Darfur.

Those factors have slowed deployment considerably and have required a thorough review and enhancement of our plan to deploy UNAMID, so that the Mission can have maximum effect on the ground as soon as possible. To that end, Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute and a supporting technical team travelled to El Fasher from 11 to 17 April to develop an

enhanced plan with the UNAMID leadership aimed at maximizing the deployment of military and police personnel by the end of 2008. If that plan is fully implemented, UNAMID could be at 80 per cent of its authorized strength by the end of this year.

That total is based on an ambitious calculation concerning which units will be prepared to deploy within the coming months and how quickly preparations can be completed for their reception in Darfur. The result would be that by the end of 2008 15,300 out of 19,555 troops, 3,018 out of 3,772 individual police officers and 12 out of 19 formed police units will be deployed to Darfur. To reach those targets, we will have to deploy a considerable number and wide range of units.

First, key enabling units, including engineering, transportation, multi-role logistics and medical units, should deploy before the rainy season.

Secondly, the current 10 infantry battalions already deployed — four from Nigeria, four from Rwanda, one from Senegal and one from South Africa — must undertake rotations at the United Nations standard of strength and equipment. Currently, those battalions are smaller than the United Nations standard of 800 soldiers.

Thirdly, six new battalions — two from Ethiopia, two from Egypt, one from Senegal and one from Thailand — as well as two new companies from Nepal will have to deploy this year. We are planning for the deployment of the Thai and Nepalese units immediately following the arrival of the first Egyptian and Ethiopian battalions in Darfur, based on the understanding reached between the Secretary-General and President Al-Bashir on the margins of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit in Dakar. In fact, the Secretary-General recently wrote to President Al-Bashir to confirm that understanding.

Finally, 11 additional formed police units should deploy in 2008.

One of the central requirements for the success of the enhanced deployment plan is a significant strengthening of the Mission's engineering capability. It is engineers that can expedite the building of austere camps and establish the minimal infrastructure required for units to deploy. There are currently engineering works ongoing within the Mission, including by commercial contractors. The Council will

recall that three military engineering companies — from China, Egypt and Pakistan — are included in the Mission's force composition. The advance party of the Chinese company has established itself in South Darfur. While there have been difficulties in delivering their equipment, we have had very good and encouraging news from China that the deployment is going to proceed shortly and that possible reinforcements can come from other parts of the Sudan. Advance elements from the Egyptian company are in Darfur. We expect them to initiate activities by early next month. We are also finalizing with Pakistan a late shift in the unit location, after which the deployment will take place.

Those three companies will have a critical role to play in the establishment and functioning of the Mission, but meeting our targets now requires a considerable augmentation of engineering capabilities. On the military side we have already taken a number of concrete steps to that end. We are working through the possibility of temporarily deploying to Darfur elements of the Chinese, Egyptian and Pakistani engineering elements within UNMIS, with full consideration being given to the implications for UNMIS. We are requesting that incoming battalions from Ethiopia, Egypt, Senegal and Thailand include a light engineering capability. And we are asking targeted troop-contributing countries to consider contributing an additional dedicated engineering unit to the Mission.

As the Council will note, we are pursuing multiple avenues to strengthen the Mission's engineering capability, because that is a fundamental requirement for us to achieve our objectives. But strengthened engineering capability is not the only requirement for enhanced deployment. There must also be a similar improvement in the movement of goods from Port Sudan to Darfur. Customs clearance is currently taking one month, which is too long. Insecurity and banditry on the roads from El Obeid and throughout Darfur are causing local contractors to refuse to transport Mission assets along these routes. The road movement of equipment from Port Sudan to Darfur, a distance of 1,400 miles, takes on average seven weeks. This is also too long if we are to meet the deployment targets for 2008.

Government assistance in providing security along the Mission pipeline from Port Sudan to Darfur is, therefore, critical. We are encouraged by the discussions that the Government has already had with

UNAMID on this issue, and we look forward to increased cooperation in this area. At the same time, the Department of Field Support is actively exploring alternatives, such as the movement of goods by air from El Obeid to Darfur. The Department is also looking into the opening of other land routes. The air bridge option would require the Government of Sudan to open airports to United Nations activity 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as to increase United Nations ramp space at airports.

Another key aspect for implementation of the plan will be the provision by the Government of the land required to build new sites for camps in a number of locations, on the one hand, and to expand existing camps to receive rotating battalions, on the other. Those camps will also require secure access to water, which will have to be guaranteed by the Government.

We are depending heavily on our troop contributors to help us deliver the enhanced plan. We are asking for an increase in size in the battalions already in situ. In some cases we have approached troop contributors to alter the composition of military units so as to introduce engineering capability. In other cases we are asking them to transfer assets between missions. We are also asking them to deploy to locations where conditions will be austere and where military units will have to exist under the most basic conditions. We will be working most urgently with those who have not yet finalized preparations for deployment, since it now takes an average of five months from finalization of arrangements to the arrival in Darfur of a fully equipped unit.

To achieve that last and critical objective — unit readiness — we will also be relying on donors who are working with specific troop-contributing countries to ensure that they have what is required to deploy to and to function in the challenging environment of Darfur. A number of donor countries, including a group that meets regularly as the Friends of UNAMID, have been making good progress in training and equipping UNAMID troop-contributing countries. The continued efforts of the Friends of UNAMID are greatly appreciated and will be indispensable in meeting our deployment targets. That work will have to be complemented by equally serious efforts to ensure that deploying units are self-sustaining so that they can focus their energies on implementing the mandate.

We will also require sustained cooperation from the Government. Joint Special Representative Rodolphe Adada has reported that there are regular and productive consultations taking place between the Mission and the Government. We will rely heavily on those consultations being effective in our efforts to secure the land and access to water and to improve the speed at which goods move across the country. Those are all fundamental requirements of the enhanced deployment plan.

With regard to formed police units, there is continued uncertainty regarding the readiness status of most of the 11 units that are scheduled to deploy in 2008. In addition to the formed police unit from Bangladesh, which is operational in Nyala, preparations for the deployment of only two other formed police units, from Nepal and Indonesia, are complete. The ability of all other formed police units to deploy in 2008 has yet to be confirmed by the police-contributing countries, which include Egypt, Senegal, Nigeria and Pakistan. Pledged formed police units from Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Mali require assistance with equipment and training. We look to donors to assist those units in completing deployment preparations within the next two to three months, or else they will not be in a position to deploy in 2008. Finally, we hope Nigeria and Indonesia will respond favourably to our requests for one additional formed police unit each.

Last, but certainly not least, I must mention the missing capabilities — those for which we have not yet received a pledge from a troop-contributing country. Almost nine months after the adoption of resolution 1769 (2007), we continue to face shortfalls in critical areas of the force. We still lack three medium utility helicopter units, one aerial reconnaissance unit, one medium transport unit, one heavy transport unit and one multi-role logistics unit. While predeployment preparations are under way for the light tactical helicopter unit offered by Ethiopia, four additional light helicopters are still being sought in order to meet the operational requirements of the Mission. At the same time, there is still a requirement to identify, in collaboration with the African Union, police-contributing countries that have the capability to deploy the remaining seven formed police units.

I would like to once again emphasize that the successful implementation of the enhanced deployment plan is critically dependant on the assistance of the

stakeholders whom I have just mentioned. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations will continue to work with those actors to ensure that we are moving forward together in a coordinated and expeditious manner to achieve our deployment goals.

I would like to conclude my remarks by turning briefly to the political process and work being led by Special Envoys Eliasson and Salim. In this context, it is important first to say a few words about the recently concluded population census in Sudan.

After a number of delays, Sudan's fifth population census was carried out from 22 April to 6 May 2008. While it was successful in many areas of Sudan, the enumeration process in Darfur experienced a number of obstacles. As a result of the prevailing security situation in Darfur, and due to warnings received from the rebel movements in areas that they control, enumerators were unable to reach many locations, including in the region of the border with Chad. The non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the Mini Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Army all voiced their opposition to the census, which further hampered efforts to count the population in those areas.

Preliminary estimates by international observers indicate that out of a total of 81 IDP camps throughout Darfur, 25 per cent fully participated in the census, 10 per cent participated partially and over 50 per cent did not participate at all. That will complicate efforts to adjust power- and wealth-sharing arrangements as stipulated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and will also make it difficult to determine political constituencies prior to Sudan's general election in 2009.

With respect to the political process in Darfur, the Special Envoys have continued to focus their consultations with the parties on convening a dialogue on security-related issues. The Envoys' objective is for those consultations to be initiated by the end of May, and they are intensively engaging both the Government and the five movement groupings — JEM, SLM-Abdul Wahid faction, SLM-Abdul Shafie, SLM-Unity and the United Resistance Front. In the coming period, the mediation will also continue its work to encourage cohesiveness and the development of common positions within and among the parties, as well to include civil society groups in the political process.

The United Nations and the African Union are also continuing their intensive search for a chief mediator, who would be based full-time in Sudan to strengthen the African Union-United Nations mediation. We are working to identifying the appropriate individual as soon as possible.

The Security Council visited Sudan one year ago this summer and will do so again in a matter of weeks. In the time that has elapsed since the Council's last visit, the situation in Darfur has grown infinitely more complex and prospects for peace seem more remote. The parties are not demonstrating the political will to abandon the military option, engage in negotiations or fully cooperate with UNAMID and the humanitarian

community. The situation calls for a redoubling of efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table and, in the meantime, to deploy a peacekeeping operation capable of making a positive contribution. We will continue to work with our partners to achieve the ambitious objectives we have set in both those areas.

The President: I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations on the same subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.